

DON'T LET DOWN THE BARS — RAISE THEM HIGHER.

The following letter was mailed Friday, April 22, 1938 to each United States Senator and Representative in Congress.

Dear Sir:

The New York State Economic Council protests against the letting down of the immigration bars for the purpose of admitting refugees from Europe. Instead we ask the Congress to adopt even more rigid restrictions—to plug the holes through which we fear persons are now slipping unlawfully into this country. We think indeed it would be well for the American people if for a period of five years not a single immigrant were permitted to enter the United States.

On March 25th, 1938, following the union of Austria and Germany and in anticipation of the forcing out of Austria of certain residents of that country, the President of the United States stated publicly that America would open its arms to the oppressed of the earth. Secretary Hull said something to the same effect.

To carry out this plan there are now two bills before Congress — the O'Toole Bill (H.R. 6245) and the Cellar Bill (H.R. 10013).

The O'Toole Bill provides "that notwithstanding any provision of the laws, consular visas may be issued to any alien in any country whom the consul finds is of a class of persons in such country who are being persecuted on account of their race, color or political or religious beliefs . . ." The only exception is persons ineligible to citizenship in the United States (a limited class) or inadmissible on account of mental or physical condition.

The Cellar Bill defines a religious or political refugee as "any alien who in his last place of residence or place of abode outside the United States has been subject to prosecution, personal abuse or indignity, economic boycott, or social ostracism because of his religious or political beliefs or practices, or because of his racial origin." The Bill then says that "Any such alien, otherwise admissible to the United States under the immigration laws, shall not be subject to exclusion as a person likely to become a public charge, an assisted alien, a person whose passage has been paid by another, illiteracy, or as a person under sixteen years of age unaccompanied."

Then on March 30, 1938 Congressman Dickstein introduced H. J. Res. 637—a joint resolution "for the relief of political and religious refugees." This resolution permits a kind of saving up of any surplus of any quota for any country for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1938, and permits the Secretaries of State, Commerce and Labor, to redistribute this aggregate to any country they please, and in whatever manner these Secretaries determine to be "best suited to facilitate the immigration of otherwise admissible alien political or religious refugees."

There can be no question of the purpose or effect of these measures. They would tear down almost completely the bars against undesirable immigration. They would bring into the United States (along, no doubt, with some desirable persons) a group of Europe's worst agitators. They would be fuel to the flames of red intrigue here in the United States.

Hearings had been set on the three above Bills for April 20—22, and we had applied to be heard in opposition to them. Suddenly word reached us that the hearings had been indefinitely postponed.

Next day we read that a conference at the White House had discussed the method of admitting these aliens and that the conference had been attended, among others, by Secretary Perkins, Henry Morgenthau, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, Prof. Joseph Chamberlain, Bernard Baruch and Samuel Cavert of the Federal Council of Churches.

We are unable to learn what course is going to be followed. But it is apparently the determination of the Administration to force the admittance of large numbers of these so-called refugees from Austria and probably from Spain.

We urge you to refuse to pass any bills that will make such immigration possible. We urge you to take all steps necessary to prevent the entrance into the United States of any of these undesirable persons by unlawful means.

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We have two reasons.

The first is the obvious economic reason. No one is more clear than the President in pointing out the lamentable amount of employment in the United States. In almost every section business is down—incomes are down—discouragement is rife. And these conditions are getting worse rather than better. Already in order to prime the pump the President has recommended a five billion dollar spending program. In New York City on April 3, 1938, Greater New York Fund which is endeavoring to raise money to assist local charities states that half of all the youth of New York City between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four were without work and without opportunity.

Under these circumstances it is unthinkable that we should bring to our shores any of the refugees from other lands. If we cannot take care of our own, how can we possibly take care of those that belong in other lands. Is it not folly to attempt it—particularly since all other nations on earth, as we are advised, are strict in preventing the entrance into their countries of immigrants from other countries?

If such immigration were attempted the workers of the United States would be the greatest sufferers. There would be just so many more persons to compete with them for the limited number of jobs that exist today. These bills or any other bills to effectuate the same purpose, would strike a blow at every working man's home in the land.

Our second reason is that many of those who would come in under the proposed letting down of the immigration bars are persons who have been disturbers and agitators in their own land. That presumably is the very reason why the orderly governments of those countries do not want them.

Some of our larger cities, notably New York, now seethe with agitation against the American System. Any of you who attend such a WPA show as "One-Third of a Nation" at the Adelphi Theatre in New York City will note that apparently people of this kind constitute a substantial part of the audience. Reliable observers at communist meetings in Madison Square Garden report that the largest part of the audience is of that central and eastern European type that has long agitated in many lands against whatever orderly form of government may exist.

On these grounds Sir, we urge you to vote against any bill that will let down the bars.

We ask that instead the Congress investigate recent violations of the immigration laws. According to the census of 1930 there were then more than six million aliens in the United States. Unquestionably many of these are today on relief. The late Commissioner of Immigration, Col. Daniel R. MacCormack, stated that there were twenty thousand criminal aliens in the United States who could not be deported because of the inadequacy of the immigration laws.

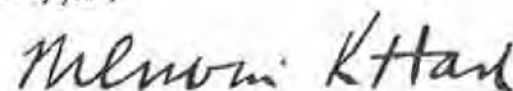
The situation has been rendered more grave by the recent reporting to the Senate of the Dies Bill, which has already passed the House and which would in effect grant an amnesty to a vast army of alien habitual criminals. The passage of this bill would make the United States the laughing-stock of the world in relation to its dealing with alien criminals.

The passage of the O'Toole and Cellar bills, and of the Dickstein Resolution, or any of them, or of any substitutes for them, would merely add to the group of foreign agitators now raising hell for the people of the United States.

This is no time to bring in fresh aliens—but rather to rid ourselves of those already here who are a public charge, if not a public menace.

It is time to build up America for Americans!

Very sincerely yours,



MERWIN K. HART,
President,
New York State Economic Council.

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TO ALL CITIZENS: If you agree with the above letter, write to your two United States Senators and your Congressman about it.